

# **Systematic review of clinical guidance documents for autism spectrum disorder diagnostic assessment in select regions**

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The increase in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnoses has been accompanied by a higher demand for ASD diagnostic assessments. Clinical guidance documents are important in determining what happens in the diagnostic assessment process. We examined eleven guidance documents that look at ASD diagnosis in children under 6, looking at both their quality and their recommendations. The documents were rated highly in terms of how they defined their audience and laid out content. The quality of the documents was rated lower in both the steps they took to identify and include available evidence and in the ways they were set up for real-world clinical practice. We found that recommendations across guidance documents varied considerably, including which professionals should be involved in the assessment and which tools should be used. While most documents supported a multi-disciplinary team assessment (i.e., including a range of clinical professionals in the decision-making process), they differed on which professionals should make up the team. More evidence is needed to support diagnostic decision making in ASD.